

Minutes of 2/4/20 Sewer Commission meeting –DPW Conference Room –520 Chase Road

Attendees: Acting Chair- Carl Luck, Members: Dave MacDonald, Mike Nault, and John Reynolds. Business Manager-Barb Lefebvre, Minutes Clerk- Jane Ranley

Guests: Brett Ramsden

Carl opened the meeting at 7:29pm.

ANNOUNCEMENTS – Barb welcomed John back to the Sewer Commission.

PUBLIC COMMENT- none

CURRENT BUSINESS -

Resignation of 2 Commissioners – Carl noted that Joan Pease and Ryan Stober had resigned and added that they are missed already. The Commission reviewed the list of terms open for commissioners and Barb stated that there will be 4 openings on the town election ballot.

Election of Officers— The Commission discussed and agreed to elect new officers at the next meeting.

FY21 Budget discussion and approval- The Commission reviewed Barb's updated draft budget. Barb noted that last quarter 29% of the customer base is billed the minimum charge of \$97.20. Dave said that they all know they need to raise rates, but asked if they would need to do it now or after town meeting? Commission discussed options for the timing of the rate increase. John added that as a rate payer, he would be concerned if he only heard about an increase at the town meeting. Mike suggested getting all the facts first before going to the town meeting. Dave said that he talked with Jack (DPW) about options for investigating spikes in flow, especially to Leominster. He also added that they need to let the users know the Commission is working on finding the sources of I/I to try to keep the rates down. The Commission discussed the Leominster rates and the IMA, which states that Lunenburg pays per the cubic foot for what flows to Leominster. The Commission reviewed the figures for Leominster usage and the increase in projected costs due to the IMA. Barb added that the Fitchburg rate will increase 8% each year. Carl stated that the Leominster IMA was negotiated in 2004 and is due to be re-negotiated in 2024. The Commission discussed the large increase in costs for the FY21 Small Water Services contract. Barb added that SWSS has a new billing and tracking system, plus they lost a long-term employee. Carl pointed out that there are more call outs and system is not as reliable as in the past. The Commission discussed clarifying the contract, writing a new RFP and looking for bids. They will discuss the Small Water Services (SWSS) contract with Town Counsel. The Commission discussed the increase in costs for generator maintenance. They also discussed having a separate line for capital expenditures and figures for infrastructure costs for the pump station repairs. They further discussed the revenue lines in the budget, including the Reserve Capacity Fund transfers, which will be used towards payments to Fitchburg for increased capacity. Barb said that Town Counsel will come to the meeting on 2/11 to discuss the SWSS contract and SWSS will come to the 2/25 meeting. All agreed that major parts should be a capital expense. Barb added that there has been discussion with Flow Assessment regarding the telemetry of the meters and there may be a cost in upgrading the flow meters. The Commission discussed other "Purchase of service" amounts, including legal costs, engineering and the flow metering contract. They also discussed working directly with Weld for generator maintenance. Barb added that they should start seeing results from the solar credits in April. She noted that in the FY20 budget, postage was reduced in anticipation of outsourced bill printing, but she is waiting on that until the meter import project is completed. The Commission discussed the figures for increases for Leominster usage. Carl questioned if the liability insurance for pump stations is adequate as they are valued at \$2.8 million. The Commission requested that Barb ask Heather if the pump stations are adequately covered. Commission also discussed the shortfalls, potential rate increase and increasing the minimum charge.

FinCom presentation will be March 19. Dave will give the presentation to FinCom and Board of Selectmen.

Small Water Systems Services (SWSS)- Invoices were already discussed, **Spare Parts discussion** – Barb reported that Albe (SWSS) requested 2 seals for Dana St. Last meeting, the Commission voted to buy 1 seal for Dana St and 1 for Leominster Rd. After discussion, the Commission agreed to only order 1 seal for each station.

Annual Town Meeting Warrant Articles discussion –Commission discussed 5 Chestnut St. and 711 Mass Ave.

properties and agreed no action was needed at present. **FY19 Annual Town Report** – will discuss at 2/11 meeting.

I/I 3rd Party review project status – Carl suggested having Woodward & Curran focus on Dana St. and Graham St. meter, to see if the data agrees. Dave suggested that parking lot runoff could be contributing to the extra flow. The Commission agreed to support Carl interfacing with Woodward & Curran.

Minutes for 1/14/20- will be discussed at the 2/11 meeting.

Business Manager Report – Invoices – Fitchburg Usage- \$15,620.63 and Wright Pierce - \$346.77. Barb will no longer post the meetings in the **Lunenburg Ledger** since there have been errors in the past. The Commission discussed options for letting users know about the rate increase. The suggestions were bill inserts, articles in the Lunenburg Ledger, mailings, televised meeting, town website and public comment at BOS meetings. The Commission also will let users know what has been done to keep costs down. Commission discussed the meetings with Town Counsel on 2/11 and SWSS on 2/25. The December **SWSS monthly report** is on the google drive. **33 Elizabeth St. I/I letter**-was sent last week but she has not received a reply yet. Barb will have an answer from town counsel at the 2/11 meeting regarding Michael-Ray Jeffrey's betterment request.

Member Agenda Inputs for Future Meetings - none

Public Comment- Brett thanked the Commission for letting him attend. Dave suggested looking at having a Commercial rate and Residential rate.

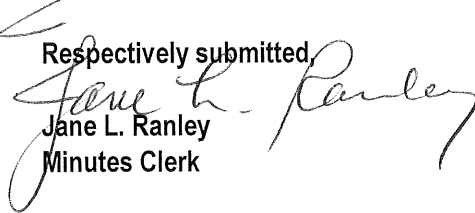
Motion: Dave M.

To adjourn at 9:59pm

Second: Mike N.

Vote: Unanimous

Respectively submitted,


Jane L. Ranley
Minutes Clerk